



10/25/2017



## Table of Contents

Are You Ready?.....	1
Initiative and Challenge Overview.....	2
Waste Management Strategies.....	4
Lifestyle Shift: Reducing Food Waste.....	6
What Is The F2G2W Challenge? - Logistics and Rules.....	12
The Health Challenge.....	22
Important Dates.....	23
Appendix:	
Facts About Garbage and Food Insecurity.....	24

# Are You Ready?

Dear Participant,

Thank you for joining the Food Too Good To Waste Challenge! Are you ready to...

- Learn how to save money on your grocery bill each month?
- Improve your health?
- Eat the healthiest, freshest and best food of your life?

We hope so because that is exactly what is going to happen as you matriculate through the Challenge.

For the next six weeks we will teach you how to improve your health by simply eating more fresh fruits and vegetables, shopping more efficiently and implementing waste diversion and reduction strategies into your daily, weekly and monthly routine. This will require a deep personal commitment and strict discipline from you and your family. You will have to exercise a high level of discipline, but the reward for completing the challenge (and winning) is well worth the effort.

Former Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm said, “You don’t make progress by standing on the sidelines.”

So, get off the sidelines and take control of your health. Get ready because the next six weeks will change your life!

**Again, we ask, are you ready?!**

# Initiative and Challenge Overview

## Healthy Communities

Healthy Communities is an educational initiative that uses personal health as a motivator for residents to reduce the waste they throw in the garbage can. It was created by the City of Charlotte Solid Waste Services to help address measures outlined in the City's Environmental Focus Area Plan:

- Measure 1:** reducing tonnage landfilled per curbside residential unit compared to the prior fiscal year.
- Measure 2:** increasing composting.
- Measure 3:** promoting waste options.

The Healthy Communities program has addressed these measures by:

- Educating students in local schools, neighborhood leaders and community members through interactive presentations and classes.
- Hosting community dinner parties, cooking classes and waste tours.
- Partnering with schools, local non-profits, government, and neighborhood organizations to provide fresh fruits and vegetables to neighborhood residents.
- Sponsoring the Food Too Good To Waste Challenge

In FY16, the City of Charlotte landfilled 1,719.9 pounds of garbage from each single-family residential unit. By the end of FY19, Solid Waste Services wants to reduce the amount landfilled from each residential curbside unit by 5 percent. This would bring the total amount landfilled per residential unit to 1,633.9 by the end of FY19.

To do this, the City needs to reduce the amount of food going to the landfill, and increase residents' use of other waste diversion and reduction options such as buying in bulk, reusing, upcycling, recycling and composting.

Solid Waste Services is leading an effort to support the City's goal by helping to change the way our community thinks about waste and how to manage it. Through the Healthy Communities program, City Solid Waste is making waste reduction personal by showing that there is a direct connection between the environment and personal health.

### Consider these facts:

- Environmental factors contribute to 23 percent of all deaths worldwide. 36 percent of these deaths are children 0-14 years old. (results from World Health Organization's analysis on "Preventing disease through healthy environments")
- Diseases such as cancer, heart disease, stroke, diabetes and kidney disease are taking over minority communities. In fact, according to the 2014 State of the County Health report, these diseases are the top chronic diseases impacting residents in Mecklenburg County.
- These diseases are in many ways connected to air, soil and water pollution.
- Landfilled trash, including food waste, contribute to air and soil pollution.

These facts suggest that air and soil pollution from landfills can have a negative impact on your health that can be improved with proper waste management.

# Waste Management Strategies

Solid Waste recommends managing your waste by practicing one or any combination of these four strategies:

- Reusing
- Recycling
- Upcycling
- Composting

By using these four strategies, the amount of garbage that goes to the landfill is reduced, which decreases of air and soil pollution. These strategies can save you money, provide business opportunities for you, promote creativity, enrich soil quality and conserve natural resources.

## Reuse



Reusing is the act of using things again, especially in a different way. When you buy a case of water or even a gallon jug, the bottles can be reused. Once you've consumed the water, the bottles can be refilled with more water, the jug could be used as a planter to grow herbs and those single water bottles can be used to water them!

## Recycle



Recycling is converting waste into reusable material. Everyone thinks of kitchen items to recycle but there are lots of bathroom items that can be recycled like toilet tissue rolls, shampoo bottles, deodorant, toothpaste tubes and lots more! When recycling, remember items should be empty and clean. To learn what can be recycled and how to recycle in the City of Charlotte go to [curbit.charlottenc.gov](http://curbit.charlottenc.gov).

## Upcycle



Upcycling is using discarded objects to create a product of higher value and quality than the original. Old clothes and furniture are great items to upcycle or transform into something better! Your favorite long sleeve winter shirt can turn into your favorite summer halter top. What about that headboard you've had forever? Add some fabric to completely transform the piece into something new that you can keep for another 10 years.

## Composting



Composting is the process of allowing organic matter to decompose as a result of the action of aerobic bacteria or fungi and other organisms. This process produces compost. We've adopted the brown bag composting method. It's four easy steps and it doesn't take much commitment, that's why we love this method. Our Facebook video demonstrates just how to do this. You can view it at <http://tiny.cc/bbcompost..>

# Lifestyle Shift: Reducing Food Waste

Knowing the waste strategies is just one part of the formula. The other part is integrating them into your daily, weekly and monthly routine. Your first focus should be on reducing the amount of food that you throw away each week.

## Why?

According to research conducted by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), food waste is the largest stream of material in American trash. Food waste is a huge environmental, economic and social problem. Once wasted food reaches landfills, it produces methane gas, which is detrimental to our ozone layer and a form of air pollution.

So, reducing food waste can have a major impact on the environment, your health and your pockets!

The waste diversion and reduction strategies previously mentioned can help you reduce the amount of food you waste. The strategies are broken down into daily, weekly and monthly tasks below. They demonstrate how you can easily integrate the strategies into your lifestyle.

## Planning

- Check the refrigerator, pantry and cupboards before purchasing food.
- Made shopping list (s) before going to the store.
- Create a menu plan for the week.
- Check the expiration date and ensured dates are appropriate for the type of food.

## Reuse

- Turn leftovers into other meals to eat.
- Share or exchanged surplus food with friends or neighbors.
- Use reusable plates, cups, and utensils for serving meals.
- Use a reusable bag at the grocery store.

## Smart Shopping

- Avoid buying bulk promotion food packs.
- Buy smaller amounts of food from the store.

## Smart Food Storage

- Freeze food that was close to expiry date.
- Store food properly to keep food longer.

## Composting

- Composte food waste (either at home or through a community-based program or paid service).

## Upcycling

- Upcycle an item by turning it into something new, different (think HGTV)

## Recycling

- Recycle glass, aluminum and/or plastic.
- Recycle empty items from the bathroom.
- Recycle cardboard.

## Other

- Reduce portions of food cooked.
- Communicate with family members about food management.
- Cook/eat entire vegetable or fruit.
- Eat more fresh fruits and vegetables instead of processed food.

## Shopping Smart

Shopping smart will help you reduce your food bill AND reduce the amount of food you waste. Use these tips to smart shopping:

- Make a grocery list before going to the store.
- Shop when you don't have much time.
- Compare unit prices.
- Compare packages in general.
- Pay with cash.
- Don't accept free samples.
- Check the circulars.
- Buy store brands.
- Clean your refrigerator and/or pantry before going shopping.
- Remember to tear the coupon off the product.
- Shop the top and the bottom shelves, that's where the less expensive items are.
- Don't use coupons you don't need.

Taken from: <https://money.usnews.com/money/personal-finance/slideshows/10-ways-to-shop-smarter-at-the-grocery-store>

### Notes:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Food Preparation and Storage

Knowing how to properly prepare and store your food plays a major role in reducing the amount of food waste that goes into the landfill and the amount of money you can save on your grocery bill. Correct preparation and food storage lengthens the lifespan of your fruits, vegetables and meat.

What you need for food preparation and storage:

- Storage containers
- Plastic bags
- Parchment paper
- Aluminum foil
- Plastic containers
- Freezing
- Storing produce in refrigerator
- Vacuum sealer systems
- Canning
- Juicing

### Smart food preparation:

Consider this:

- Think about how many meals you'll eat at home this week and how long before your next shopping trip.
- Next to fresh items on your shopping list, note the quantity you need or number of meals you're buying for.
- Shop your kitchen first and note items you already have.
- Prepare perishable foods soon after shopping. It will be easier to whip up meals later in the week, saving time, effort and money.
- When you get home from the store, take the time to wash, dry, chop, dice, slice, and place your fresh food items in clear storage containers for snacks and easy cooking.
- Befriend your freezer and visit it often.
- Freeze food such as bread, sliced fruit, or meat that you know you won't be able to eat in time.
- Cut your time in the kitchen by preparing and freezing meals ahead of time.
- Prepare and cook perishable items, then freeze them for use throughout the month. For example, bake and freeze chicken breasts or fry and freeze taco meat.

## Smart Storage for fruits and veggies:

INSIDE THE FRIDGE • Apples, berries, and cherries • Grapes, kiwi, lemons, and oranges • Melons, nectarines, apricots, peaches, and plums (after ripening at room temperature) • Avocados, pears, tomatoes (after ripening at room temperature) • Almost all vegetables and herbs

OUTSIDE THE FRIDGE • Bananas, mangos, papayas, and pineapples: store in a cool place • Potatoes and onions: store in a cool, dark place • Basil and winter squashes: store at room temperature— once cut, store squashes in fridge

## More Storage Tips

- If you like your fruit at room temperature, take what you will eat for the day out of the fridge in the morning.
- Many fruits give off natural gases that hasten the spoilage of other nearby produce. Store bananas, apples, and tomatoes by themselves and store fruits and vegetables in different bins.
- Consider storage bags and containers designed to help extend the life of your produce.
- To prevent mold, wash berries just before eating.

## Tech Tip:

The Food Safety app (<https://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/foodkeeperapp/>) can help you determine the best way to store your food.

## Notes:

---

---

---

---

---

## Apples

Store apples in the **fridge** to extend shelf life.

One bad apple can ruin the whole bunch, so eat up the bruised ones first!

For longer storage, store in a cardboard box covered with a damp towel.



## Artichokes

Place in an **airtight container** with a damp towel for moisture and store in the **fridge**.



## Asparagus

Store asparagus in the **fridge**.

- Trim the base of the stalks and place upright in a jar filled with an inch of water.
- Or, wrap the cut ends of the stalks in a moist paper towel or rag.

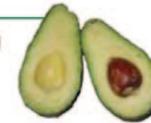


## Avocados

To speed up ripening, place in a paper bag and place an apple in the bag with them.

Once ripe, store avocados in the **fridge**.

Mix avocados or guacamole with a little lemon or lime juice or leave the pit in to slow browning.



## Bananas

Store bananas **on the counter away from other fruit**. They give off ethylene gas, which speeds ripening in other produce.

Bananas can be **frozen** with or without their peel and used later in baked goods or smoothies.



## Basil

Basil is a warm weather crop and turns black quickly in the fridge. Store **on the counter** in a glass of water like a cut flower with the stem in the water, or wrapped in a dry paper towel in an **airtight container**.



## Beans, cooked/canned

Store unused cooked beans in the **fridge** in their liquid or water.

You can **freeze** cooked beans in liquid. Put cooked beans in a can/freeze jar and fill with cooking liquid or water.



## Beans, dry

Store dry, uncooked beans in an **airtight container** in a cool, dry place.



## Beans, green

Store unwashed green beans in the **fridge** in an **airtight container**. Wet beans will develop black spots and decay quickly.

Green beans can be **frozen**, either raw or blanched. Freeze on a cookie sheet in a single layer and transfer to an **airtight container**.



## Beets

Store beets in the **fridge** (greens removed) in an **airtight container** with a paper towel inside to absorb moisture.

You can **freeze** beets by blanching them and storing in an airtight container.

Don't forget to eat the beet greens! Check out "Greens, cooking" for more information on how to store them.



## Berries

Before storing berries, remove any spoiled or crushed fruits, and store unwashed in an **airtight container**. Try not to put them into too many layers because berries are fragile.

Don't wash until ready to eat—any added moisture encourages mold. If you must wash them, we have heard that adding a little white vinegar to the water helps keep them from deteriorating as quickly.

Store excess berries in the freezer in an **airtight container**. Freeze them on a cookie sheet first before transferring to a container to avoid sticking.



# What Is The F2G2W Challenge?

The Food Too Good To Waste Challenge is a six-week challenge that allows you to put what you've learned into action. Through the challenge you will compete against other residents, organizations and neighborhoods to see who can eliminate the most food waste from their garbage, thus reducing your overall waste footprint. The lower your food waste number the higher your chance for winning a prize!

## Challenge Logistics and Rules

### Challenge Logistics

#### Your goal:

Reduce the amount of waste you generate weekly by reducing the amount of food you throw away.

#### What you'll need:

- Two trash cans - one for food waste and one for regular garbage.
- A kitchen scale

#### What we supply:

- A grey 10-gallon trash can specifically for your food waste
- A kitchen scale to weigh your food waste and regular trash

#### What you need to do:

- Line your grey 10-gallon food waste trash can with a trash bag.
- Separate your food waste (food from all meals and unwanted food in the refrigerator) from your regular garbage, by putting all food waste in your grey 10-gallon trash can.
- Weigh your food waste daily or weekly. To weigh your food waste, remove the plastic bag from the trash can. Place the plastic bag with food waste on top of the scale.
- Record your food waste weight in the F2G2W app. Weights must be recorded every Sunday during the challenge (see Important Dates chart on page 17).
- Weigh and record your regular garbage weight in the F2G2W app. Weights must be recorded every Sunday during the challenge (see Important Dates chart on page 23).
- Place the plastic bag with food waste in your regular garbage can.
- Place a new plastic bag in the grey food waste trash can provided.
- Repeat process for the duration of the challenge.

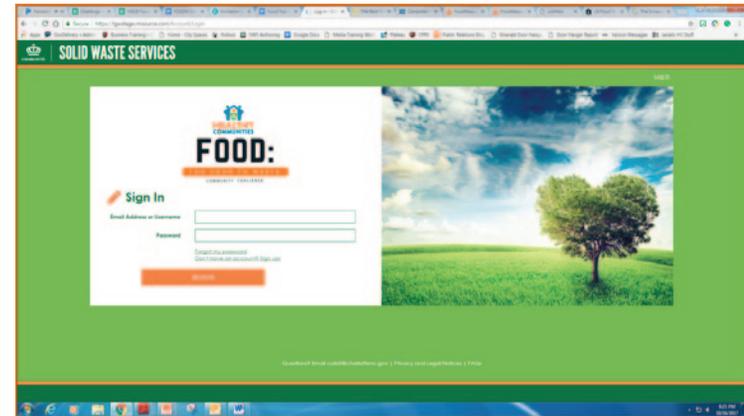


## How To Log Your Weights Using The F2G2W App

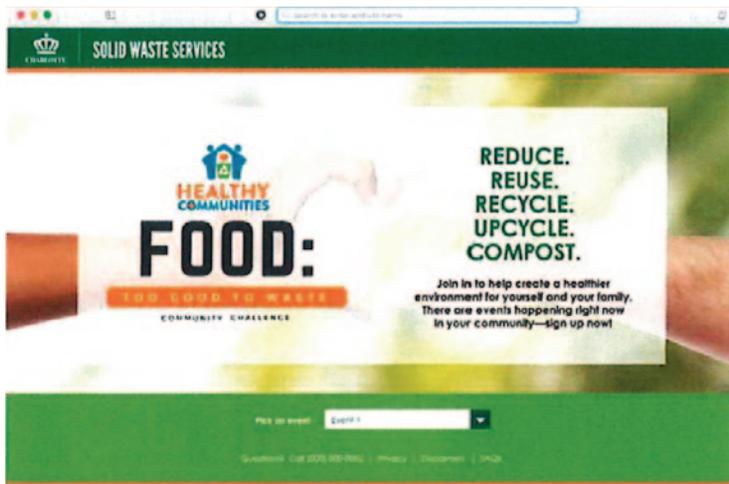
Go to the following link to add the app to your device:  
<https://tgw.charlottenc.gov>



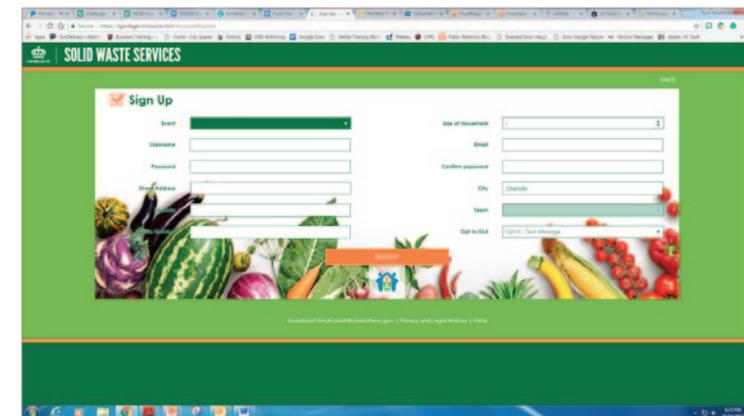
From this screen, select login located at the top right corner. Select don't have an account, sign up.



Once you've gone to the link, you'll see this home page:

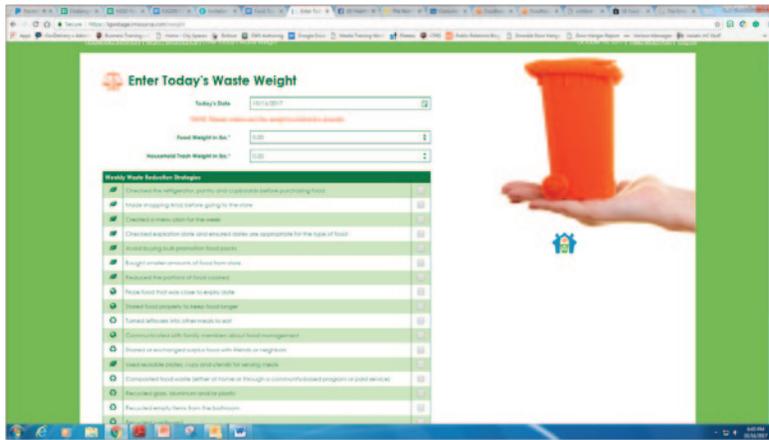


Create an account.

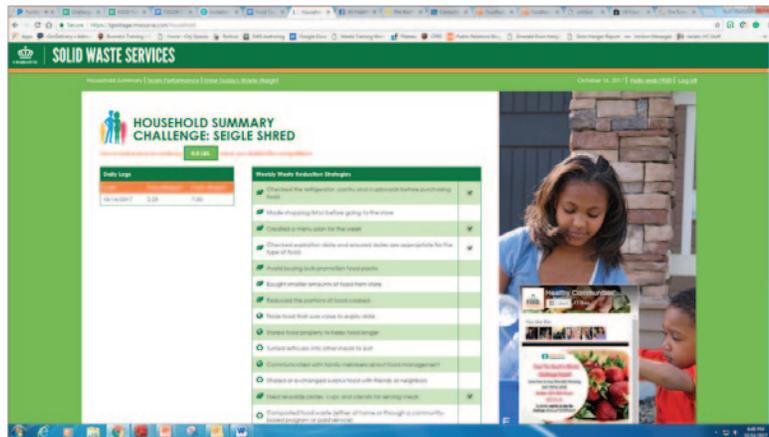




You'll now see this screen.



Enter your weights, making sure you've selected the correct date. Select any waste strategies that you did that week (you get points towards prizes)! Save your entry and you'll automatically go to the Household Summary. Verify your weights.



Repeat the steps for signing in and logging your weights every Sunday.

You can use the app for more than logging your weights. You can see how well you're performing, compare your performance with others and connect to the F2G2W Facebook page.

## Challenge Rules

- You may participate in the challenge as an individual or request City staff to register your team of no more than 10 people/ households. Teams may be friends, neighbors, church groups, organizations, etc.
- The individual who reduces the most waste during the six-week challenge receives a prize package, bragging rights and city wide recognition.
- The team who reduces the most waste during the six-week challenge receives a prize package, bragging rights and city wide recognition
- In order to be considered for prizes and/or bragging rights, you have to participate and weigh in every week.

## Challenge Calculations

- **Household waste:**  
Food waste + garbage
- **Individual household waste:**  
Household waste/ # of people in the household
- **Team waste:**  
All team members' household waste/total # of people in each team member's household

## F2G2W Challenge FAQ

### What is the purpose of the Food Too Good to Waste Challenge?

The Healthy Communities Food Too Good to Waste Challenge seeks to reduce waste by teaching you how to improve your health by simply eating more fresh fruits and vegetables, shopping more efficiently and implementing waste diversion and reduction strategies into your daily, weekly and monthly routine.

### How often am I supposed to weigh in?

You have the option to weigh in daily, but it is required that you weigh in at the end of every week by Sunday. The Food Too Good to Waste Challenge keeps an average of your food waste and garbage weights for six weeks. If you are a person who empties their in-home garbage can multiple times a week, remember to weigh the bag before you empty the garbage into your larger garbage cart.

### What is the last day I can enter my weight(s) for the week?

Sunday is the last day you are able to enter your weight(s) for the week. The weekly deadline dates are as followed:

November 5   November 12   November 19  
November 26   December 3   December 10

Please visit [healthycommunitiesclt.com](http://healthycommunitiesclt.com) for more specific details.

### How do I weigh my food waste and garbage?

- Before the challenge began you should have received a food scale and a grey 10-gallon trash can. If you do not have a trash can and/or a food waste scale please email [curbit@charlottenc.gov](mailto:curbit@charlottenc.gov).
- Line your grey 10-gallon food waste trash can with a trash bag.
- Separate and put all food waste into the 10-gallon trash can. This includes food from all meals and unwanted food in the refrigerator.
- Remove plastic bag from the trash can each Sunday. Place the plastic bag with food waste on the top of the scale. Weigh your weekly food waste in pounds.
- Remove garbage bag from your personal garbage can. Place the plastic bag with garbage on the top of the scale. Weigh your weekly garbage weight.

### What measurement should I weigh my food waste in?

Pounds (lbs). Before weighing your food waste and garbage ensure that your scale is set to pounds.

### How is my ranking calculated?

The calculation for rankings is the sum of your average food waste weight plus any waste reduction strategies that you use. **Note:** *All waste reduction strategies are not ranked equally. Some strategies are worth more points than others. Example: If the Johnson family marked on the strategies list that they checked the refrigerator and cabinets before going to the grocery store, which is a prevention strategy, they would score higher than if they marked they stored their food properly, which is a combination strategy.*

### What happens if I miss a week?

In order to be considered for any prizes you have to participate **all six weeks** of the challenge. After Sunday evening, you will not be able to go back and enter weights for the previous week. If you do happen to miss a week, you may continue to participate in the challenge, but will not be considered for any prizes.

### Is there a way to interact with other challenge participants?

You may join the Healthy Communities Food Too Good to Waste Challenge Facebook group at <https://www.facebook.com/F2G2Wclt>. You can also follow Solid Waste Services (@CLTSWS) on Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest and Twitter.

### Who do I contact if I have any other questions or concerns?

If you have any other questions or concerns please send an email to [curbit@charlottenc.gov](mailto:curbit@charlottenc.gov).

For details and information please visit [healthycommunitiesclt.com](http://healthycommunitiesclt.com).



# Appendix

## Facts About Garbage and Food Insecurity

### Garbage

- There's a direct link between your personal health and the environment.
- The top five chronic diseases in Mecklenburg County - cancer, heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, and diabetes - these diseases can be connected to poor air and soil quality.
- Garbage is a major contributor to poor air and soil quality and global warming.
- Garbage decomposes in the landfill and emits methane gas.
- The EPA estimates landfills are the third largest cause of methane gas emissions.
- Methane is a powerful greenhouse gas that is 35 times more powerful at trapping heat in the atmosphere, which is the cause of climate change, this gas comes from landfills.
- Changing our waste management habits will reduce the amount of garbage going to the landfill and decrease methane gas production.
- Composting, upcycling, reusing and recycling are all ways to reduce the amount of waste going in the landfill.
- Eating more fresh fruits and vegetables can improve your health and the health of the environment because it reduces the amount of packaging, which is waste.
- Things we can do now to improve the environment include:
  - Minimize the items we throw in the garbage. i.e. avoid the garbage can at all costs.
  - Shop/buy fresh fruits and vegetables. Example: farmers' market
  - Make use of community gardens.

- Buy in bulk using the bulk section at the grocery stores, the less packaging the better.
- Shop closeout stores.
- Eat in, do potlucks!
- Don't get individual baggies for your produce, place all items in one reusable bag.
- Visit [www.healthycommunitiesclt.com](http://www.healthycommunitiesclt.com), click LEARN for more fun facts and tips.

### Food Insecurity

- Food is the largest stream of materials in household trash.
- More than 37 million tons of food waste was generated in 2013.
- 48 million Americans live in food insecure households, about 73,000 of those people live in Mecklenburg County.
- Food loss and waste totals \$161 billion dollars.
- 31 percent of available food goes uneaten in the United States.
- 18% of Mecklenburg County are affected by food insecurity.
- 22% of children in Mecklenburg County live in food insecure activity.
- We can manage our food waste by being conscious about how we shop, prepare and store food.
- Start by buying only what you need.
- Keep fruits and vegetables fresh by storing them in their proper place.
- Prepare perishable food as soon as possible, preferably right after shopping.
- Be mindful of left overs and old ingredients that need to be used sooner rather than later.
- Freeze leftovers that won't be eaten within three days.
- In previous challenges, by the end of the six weeks, families were able to reduce their food waste by 25% or more.